

**THE MINUTES
OF THE
WARRANT COMMITTEE MEETING
MAY 14, 2003**

Chairman Widmer called the meeting to order at 7:40 PM.

Members absent: W. Flewelling, L. McCormick, and G. Tillotson

Also present: Town Administrator Mel Kleckner, Selectman Paul Solomon, and Town Accountant Hagg

Handout(s) given out tonight:

1. *Emergency Notification of Minuteman Assessment Change for FY 2004 (May 2, 2003) distributed by Town Accountant Hagg*
2. *Reserve Fund Transfer May 6, 2003 memo from Alfred Dattoli distributed by Town Accountant Hagg*
3. *FY03 Reserve Fund Transfers worksheet distributed by Town Accountant Hagg*

Acceptance of Minutes

The Committee discussed and the minutes of the April 23, 2003 meeting.

- *Member Hofmann made a motion, Member Heigham seconded said motion, and the Committee unanimously voted to accept the minutes of April 23, 2003.*

The Committee discussed and the minutes of the April 30, 2003 meeting.

- *Member Hofmann made a motion, Member Heigham seconded said motion, and the Committee unanimously voted to accept the minutes as amended of April 30, 2003.*

Warrant Committee Schedule Prior to June Town Meeting

Chairman Widmer discussed with the Committee the available meeting dates from tonight to June Town Meeting. He reviewed the major topics upcoming in June: fire stations, Waverley Fire Station, compensation plan, MWRA (possibly), elected official salaries, etc.

Selectman Brownsberger said the Board of Selectmen would be reviewing the budget on June 2nd. Town Administrator Kleckner said he is focusing on a couple major things still not definite with the State Budget: State Aid and the Minuteman assessment. Possible other changes would be the Light Department increasing their annual contribution to the

Town and trying to fill the Information Technology Advisory Committee's recommendations.

Chairman Widmer acknowledged the Committee should be up to date and discuss any questions the Warrant Committee has prior to the Board of Selectmen's discussion. The Senate's budget should be available next Wednesday. On May 21st, the Warrant Committee meeting will have a budget discussion using the most current available budget.

Town Administrator Kleckner discussed the Town-owned vehicle policy. The policy has been amended, but some of the privileges and authorizations still need to be changed. He has developed an audit of every individual who is assigned a vehicle as well as their use, mileage and other pertinent information. He will get this information to the Board of Selectmen in conjunction with the FY04 Budget discussion on June 2. Member Hofmann believes this is an administrative matter now that the Warrant Committee Subcommittee has made their recommendations. Vice Chairman White would like the cost savings quantified and available when this is presented to the Board of Selectmen. Town Administrator Kleckner said that those recommendations the administration does make would include the financial figures from the Subcommittee's report. Member Hofmann thinks where the employee lives should not be a factor on whether the vehicle is needed. Town Administrator Kleckner said that if one of the bases for having the vehicle is emergency response, and somebody lives in Portsmouth, NH, then we would have to look at how realistic it is for that person to respond in an emergency. There will be some basic evaluation on that matter. Chairman Widmer asked for either Members Hofmann or Oates to attend the June 2nd Board of Selectmen meeting as a resource and report back to the Warrant Committee on the Town-owned vehicle matter.

Vice Chairman White understands the Minuteman (*Handout 1*) memo comes out to an additional \$160K charge to Belmont. This will leave us scrambling to find this money to balance the budget. Chairman Widmer said this is one of about two or three moving pieces of the budget to consider. Chairman Widmer added the Committee will be discussing this especially in the upcoming weeks. It seems to Vice Chairman White that a broad-brush discussion of this would be needed next week. Chairman Widmer agreed that this and other issues would be addressed next week.

Member Callanan wondered that besides the Minuteman figure of about \$165K, what are the other moving targets? Town Administrator Kleckner responded State Aid. He added all the revenues would be reviewed again, but nothing else is expected to have that kind of volatility with that magnitude.

Member Heigham mentioned the Town Clerk is having her salary moved at Town Meeting to a level at what she thinks it ought to be, not what the Warrant Committee Subcommittee thinks it should be. He is happy to present a few slides to show: there is historically a 10% difference between the Town Clerk and Town Treasurer, the Warrant Committee Subcommittee reviewed similar towns in the area and \$62,454 is the average amount. The Subcommittee's recommendation was to set the market rate at \$67K, and

since the Town Clerk's salary is currently above this market rate, the recommendation was for a 1% increase, which is consistent with management's salary rate increase.

Member Brusch mentioned a handout she received during Town Meeting regarding the "Town Clerk/Elected Official Salary." This will be copied and distributed to the Committee before next week's meeting. The Committee should be prepared for someone to make an amendment to increase the Town Clerk's salary, and the Committee needs to be ready to refute the amendment.

Member Callanan added to please not forget we are talking about a person here. If there were more than two people involved, the issue would not be as difficult. Something should be said in Town Meeting that this decision was not based on personality or performance, but on the position.

The Committee discussed how to present this issue to Town Meeting.

Member Brusch remembered the Town Clerk put her salary in Town Clerk's Budget at a 4% increase, but the Warrant Committee, through discussions for management, recommended a 3% increase. That would account for a difference in money. Member Morley said the Subcommittee would meet with the Town Clerk before Town Meeting to tell her the Warrant Committee's recommendation is still appropriate.

Selectman Brownsberger wants to make sure it is known to Town Meeting that employees above the mid-point are receiving a minimal salary increase or none at all.

Vice Chairman White asked if he should talk to Water Superintendent Schultz if they are still interested going through with the MWRA loan article. Selectman Brownsberger recommended he speak to Water Commissioner Chairman French in the next week or so for that decision.

Chairman Widmer said that when it came time to present the FY04 Budget, the Warrant Committee would take about a ½ hour laying out: the five year picture, the cost cutting picture, and the health care initiative. This should be done so that Town Meeting gets an idea of the size and scope of the problems the Warrant Committee has been working through this year.

Chairman Widmer will meet with Town Moderator Hall regarding some issues the Committee has been discussing, such as starting the FY04 Budget discussion at an earlier part of the meeting.

Other

Reserve Fund Transfer

Town Administrator Kleckner mentioned that when any one individual dispatcher is out on leave, it creates a strain in the department. A budget crisis occurred when the employee on sick leave was paid from accrued time and the department had to pay someone to come in and fill those hours.

Both Town Accountant Hagg and Member Stratford mentioned the School Department is not expecting to make a Reserve Fund Transfer request for FY03.

Vice Chairman White asked if the Board of Selectmen is recommending filling the two full-time position request from Public Safety Communications (*Handout 2 page 2*). Town Administrator Kleckner responded yes.

The Warrant Committee will vote on this request at the May 21st meeting.

Member Brusch reported that the Recreation Department used \$11K of \$25K in Senior Program money to fund other things through the year. The Recreation Department cannot cover the 53rd week, and they will be coming to the Warrant Committee for a Reserve Fund Transfer in the near future. Member Brusch has contacted one of the Recreation Commissioners to make her aware of this issue and talk to her about it. She will follow-up with this Commissioner tomorrow.

Cost Cutting Initiatives

Member Brusch discussed the “Cost Cutting Initiatives Update: May 2003” document (passed out prior to tonight’s meeting).

Pay As You Throw

Pay As You Throw will be taken on next fiscal year. Member Stratford asked if there was anything in the Town Bylaws that would prevent this issue from occurring. Selectman Brownsberger said that before anything was done, a firm legal foundation and a popular vote would be established.

Resource Sharing

Selectman Brownsberger mentioned there was a technology review done of the Town’s resources. The result was a recommendation of having a Town-wide Information Technology Director. In his mind, resource sharing at a technology level is not as easy as it seems.

Bulk Purchasing

This would wait until after we have gotten GASB 34 underway.

Use of Overtime

The Subcommittee needs to sit down and tell the Departments what the Subcommittee wants and how they want it.

Collective Bargaining Contracts

The Town contracts have been done. The School contracts are now up and will be reviewed next.

Branch Libraries

Member Hobbs said there are so many things intertwined. Before Town Meeting, this needs to be more current. Chairman Widmer said the report should be current in the sense of saying, "This is the present thinking of the Library."

Review Police Staffing

That was completed, and the Warrant Committee Subcommittee recommended a staffing level of 48. Vice Chairman White mentioned what is now in Town Administrator Kleckner's hands is changing the shift requirements. Town Administrator Kleckner responded this issue is being looked at by counsel and discussed.

Early Retirement Incentive

This item was discussed and completed.

Additional Suggestions

Member Bruschi discussed some additional suggestions that have arisen over the past nine months. Since there are no agreements with private schools and other non-profits to the Town, this issue ought to be looked into further. Town Administrator Kleckner said the Assessors have been aggressive in this area.

Other suggestions brought to Member Bruschi are: website transactions, competitively bidding the Light Department, outsource billing, and Fire Department staffing (since Police Department was reviewed already).

Capital Spending Overview

This topic will be discussed next week.

Chairman Widmer reminded the Warrant Committee the Mega Meeting will be held at 7:30 at the Town Hall (either the Selectmen's Meeting Room or the Auditorium). **All Warrant Committee members are expected to attend.**

Member Heigham made a motion, and it voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:27 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristina E. Frizzell

Recording Clerk